

Recovering the Heart of Reformed Spirituality

Union with Christ and Spiritual Disciplines



Dwell in Me, O Blessed Spirit

Dwell in me, O blessed Spirit!
How I need Thy help divine!
In the way of life eternal,
Keep, O keep this heart of mine!

Dwell in Me, O Blessed Spirit

Dwell in me, O blessed Spirit!
Gracious Teacher, Friend divine!
For the home of bliss that waits me
O Prepare this heart of mine!

Dwell in Me, O Blessed Spirit

Round the cross where Thou hast led me,
Let my purest feelings twine.
With the blood from sin that cleansed me,
Seal anew this heart of mine.

Dwell in Me, O Blessed Spirit

Dwell in me, O blessed Spirit!
Gracious Teacher, Friend divine!
For the home of bliss that waits me
O Prepare this heart of mine!

Dwell in Me, O Blessed Spirit

Let me feel Thy sacred presence;
Then my faith will ne'er decline.
Comfort Thou and help me onward;
Fill with love this heart of mine.

Dwell in Me, O Blessed Spirit

Dwell in me, O blessed Spirit!
Gracious Teacher, Friend divine!
For the home of bliss that waits me
O Prepare this heart of mine!

Overview

- I. The Need for Spiritual Discipline
- II. The Bible on Spiritual Discipline
- III. A Definition of Spiritual Discipline
- IV. The Soul
- V. Spiritual Disciplines
- VI. Summary

I. The Need for Spiritual Discipline



The discipline of synchronized swimming

I. The Need for Spiritual Discipline



The discipline of living in sync with God

II. The Bible on Spiritual Discipline

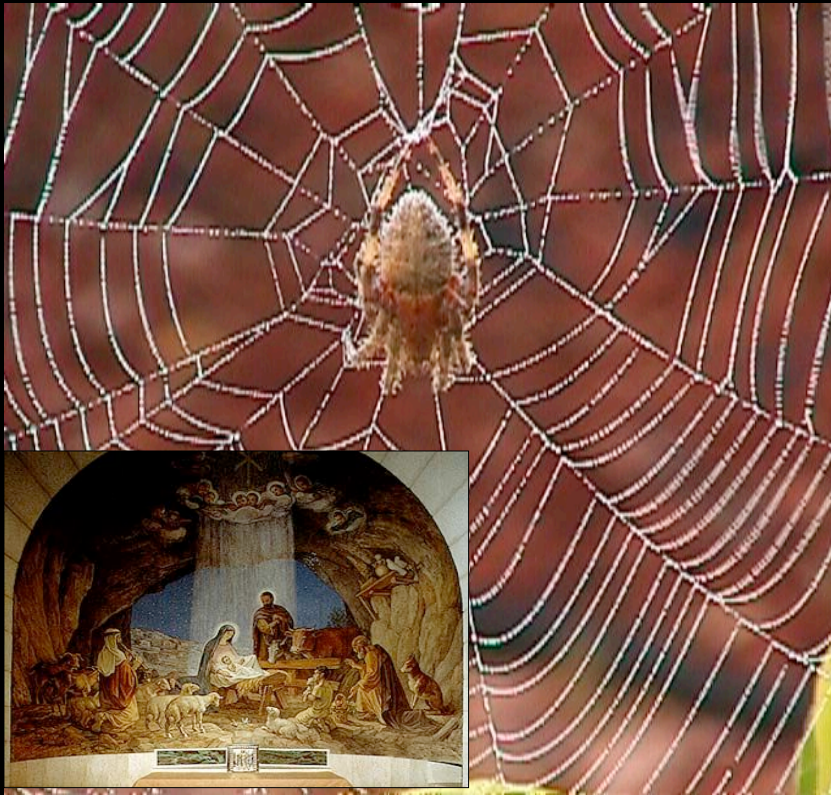
A. Philippians 2:12b-13

. . . continue to **work out** (*work in to the finish*) your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in (*energizes*) in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

Working in God's salvation



What does God do + what do we do?



Living *with* God



Living *for* God

II. The Bible on Spiritual Discipline

B. Ephesians 6:11-13

Put on **the full armor of God** so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For **our struggle** is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore, put on **the full armor of God** . . .

Spiritual warfare + spiritual armor



II. The Bible on Spiritual Discipline

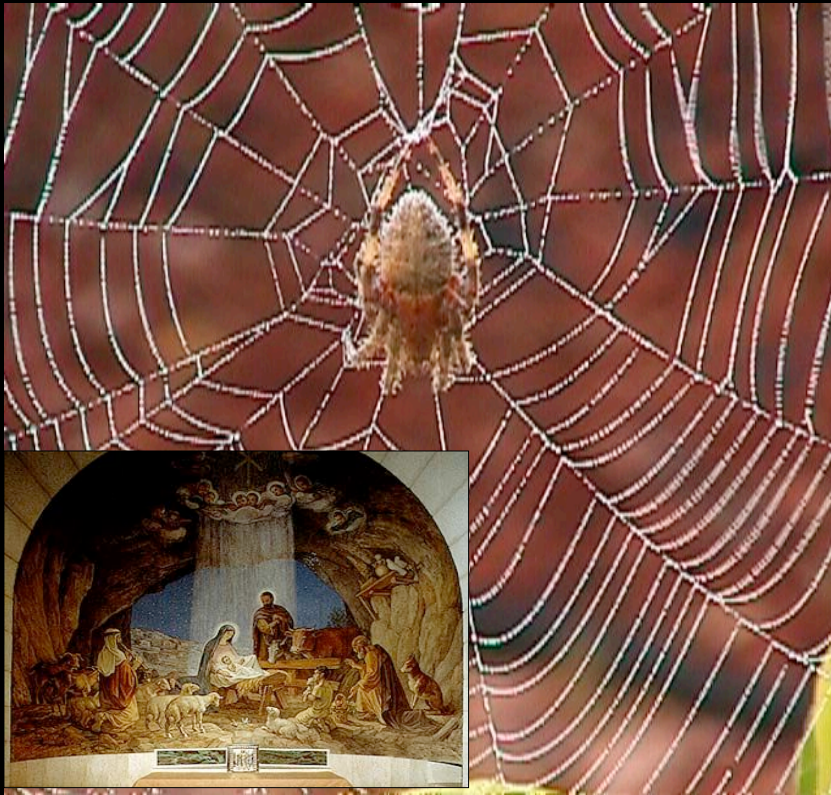
C. 2 Timothy 1:6

For this reason I remind you **to fan into flame** the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Fan into flame the gift of God



What does God do + what do we do?



Living with God



Living for God

II. The Bible on Spiritual Disciplines

D. Hebrews 12:1, 2a

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us **throw off** everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us **run with perseverance the race** marked out for us **fixing our eyes on Jesus** the pioneer and perfecter faith . . .



**Running the
race with
perseverance
fixing our eyes
on Jesus**

II. The Bible on Spiritual Discipline

E. 1 Corinthians 9:25 and 27

Everyone who competes in the games goes into **strict training** . . .

. . . I **beat my body** and **make it my slave** so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

I beat my body and make it my slave



III. Definition of Spiritual Discipline

The Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible

A spiritual discipline is an **intentionally directed action** by which we do what we **can** do in order to receive from God the ability (or power) to do what we **cannot** do by direct effort.

What we *cannot* do by direct effort



Living in sync with God

What we *can* do in order to receive
from God the ability or power



Engage in spiritual disciplines

III. Definition of Spiritual Discipline

Examples: Disciplines of Abstinence

Solitude
Silence
Fasting
Frugality
Chastity
Secrecy
Sacrifice

III. Definition of Spiritual Discipline

Examples: Disciplines of Engagement

Study
Worship
Celebration
Service
Prayer
Fellowship
Confession
Submission

III. Definition of Spiritual Discipline

Examples: Inward Disciplines

Meditation

Prayer

Fasting

Study

III. Definition of Spiritual Discipline

Examples: Outward Disciplines

Simplicity
Solitude
Submission
Service

III. Definition of Spiritual Discipline

Examples: Corporate Disciplines

Confession

Worship

Guidance

Celebration

III. Definition of Spiritual Discipline

Important note (1)

1. Spiritual disciplines are **not meritorious**, but make us **response-able**.
2. Spiritual Disciplines are **permeated** by grace.

Spiritual disciplines make you
response-able



**Spiritual disciplines are permeated with
grace**



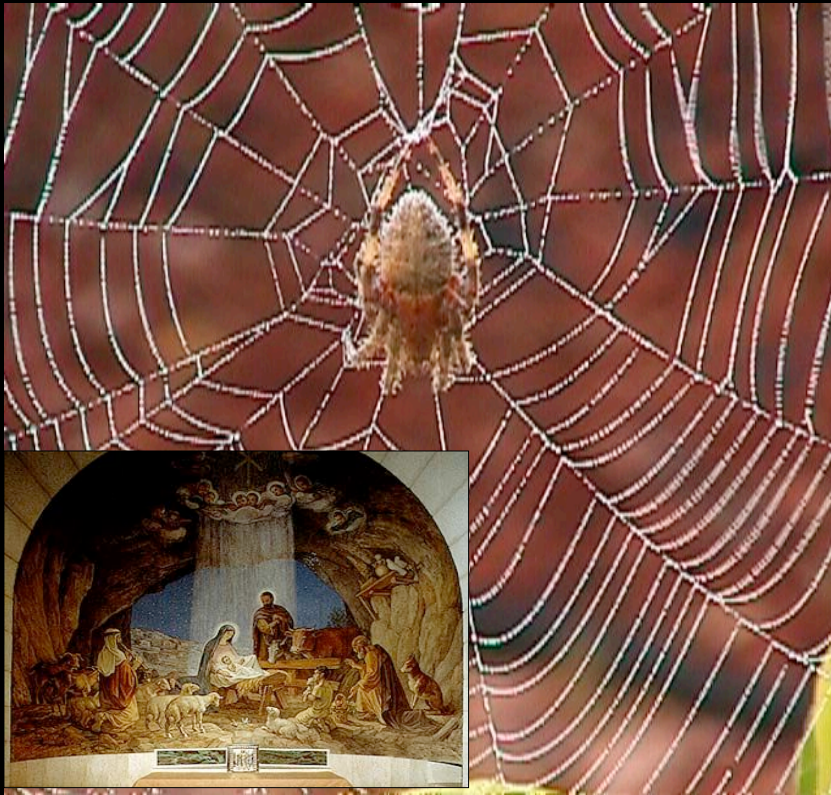
III. Definition of Spiritual Discipline

Important note (2)

“ . . . He makes **the will**, which was dead, **alive**; which was bad, **good**; which was unwilling, **willing**; and which was stubborn, **obedient**.

He **moves** and **strengthens** it so that, like a good tree, it may be able to produce the fruit of good works.” **Canons of Dort III/IV, 11**

What does God do + what do we do?



Living with God



Living for God

IV. The Soul

A. Your many-sided, mobile, immaterial self

Your soul is a **closed space** with which you **engage** God, self, others and creation and with which you try to have a **meaningful relationship** with these realities (Kees Waaijman: *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods*, 2002).

IV. The Soul

A. Your many-sided, mobile, immaterial self

Engaging reality is not a matter of course

For instance, your soul can:

- open itself up but also close itself
- be a source of life, but also jam up within itself
- surrender in love, but also devour itself
- live in peace with itself, but also depress itself
- turn inward, but also be beside itself.

IV. The Soul

B. Seven dimensions of the soul

1. Your soul is a vulnerable enclosed space

When this enclosed space is threatened, you **erect walls** to protect yourself.

When you do this, you run the risk of **identifying** your soul with the walls your have built around it and **becoming estranged** from your soul.

The soul protecting itself



IV. The Soul

B. Seven dimensions of the soul

2. Your soul is needy and sensitive

Your soul is an **empty** space that thirsts and hungers to be **filled** (attention, knowledge, appreciation, love)

Consequently, your soul is also **sensitive** and filled with **emotions** such as peace and love, but also fear and anxiety.

When your soul **equates** itself with what fills and satisfies it, it becomes **estranged** from itself.

A needy and thirsty soul



IV. The Soul

B. Seven dimensions of the soul

3. Your soul wants to live

The **core element** of your soul is **life** (Gen. 2:7).

Thus you are born with a strong desire **to live** and your soul wants to **grow** and **express** itself.

When your soul tries **to live on its own** it becomes **alienated** from itself because it was made to live and move and have its being in God.

The soul desires to live



IV. The Soul

B. Seven dimensions of the soul

4. Your soul is the core of who you are

There is a **strong relationship** between the soul and the core of who you are. Thus, **your I** and **your soul** belong together.

As a result, you can **reflect** upon your soul and **speak** to it (Ps. 42:5; 62:5; 103:1-2; Lk. 12:19-20).

Accordingly, you can **choose** to surrender every function of your soul to God (Dt. 30:19-20).



**The soul
is the
core of
who your
are**

IV. The Soul

B. Seven dimensions of the soul

5. Your soul is mobile

Your can can go upward and downward, forward and sideways.

- **Upward** in prayer + pride
- **Downward** in humility and depression
- **Sideways** in freedom and greed
- **Forwards** in love and bloodthirstiness.



**The
soul is
mobile**

IV. The Soul

B. Seven dimensions of the soul

6. Your soul rests in the (O)ther

Your soul has the capacity **to step out** of itself.
Your soul dearly **longs** to be with the one who loves it (Ps. 63:2).

Being with the other **entails** personal contact, communion and intimacy.

Ultimately, the soul longs **to rest** in the Other (Mt. 11:28 30; Jn. 17:21, 23).

The soul resting in the Other



IV. The Soul

B. Seven dimensions of the soul

7. Your soul can lose itself

Losing your soul is **giving your life** in love for the other. Thus, giving your life for the other is **giving your soul** in love for the other. This entails:

- Taking down its **protective walls**
- Not allowing it to be controlled by **neediness** and **sensitivity**
- Losing its tendency to live on its **own strength**.

You can only love the other like this if **God's love** has first entered into your soul (1 Jn. 4:7-11).

Giving your soul for the other



IV. The Soul

C. Spiritual discipline begins in the soul

- How much **contact** do you have with your vulnerable soul?
- Are you familiar with your own **neediness** and **emptiness**?
- Do you pay just as much **attention** to your soul as to your body?
- How **acquainted** are you with the movements of your soul?
- Do you long **to rest** in the other or is your soul so wounded you **no longer long** this?
- Are you willing **give your soul** for the other or have you shut yourself up in in your own soul?
- Has your soul become **your ego**?

Spiritual discipline begins in the soul



Living in sync with the Trinity

Spiritual discipline begins in the soul



**Working in your
salvation**

Spiritual discipline begins in the soul



Spiritual Warfare

Spiritual discipline begins in the soul



Fanning into flame the gift of God



**Spiritual
discipline
begins in the
soul**

**Fixing your eyes
on Jesus**

Spiritual discipline begins in the soul



Training my soul

IV. The Soul

D. Four functions of the soul

Two crucial introductory remarks

1. Spiritual discipline begins in the soul that **functions** as mind, heart, will and spirit.
2. Realize that when one function is **dominating**, the other functions of the soul function along with this function.

One soul functioning in different ways



IV. The Soul

D. Four functions of the soul

1. The soul functioning as mind (1)

The mind is first a **faculty of perception** comparable to your ears or eyes.

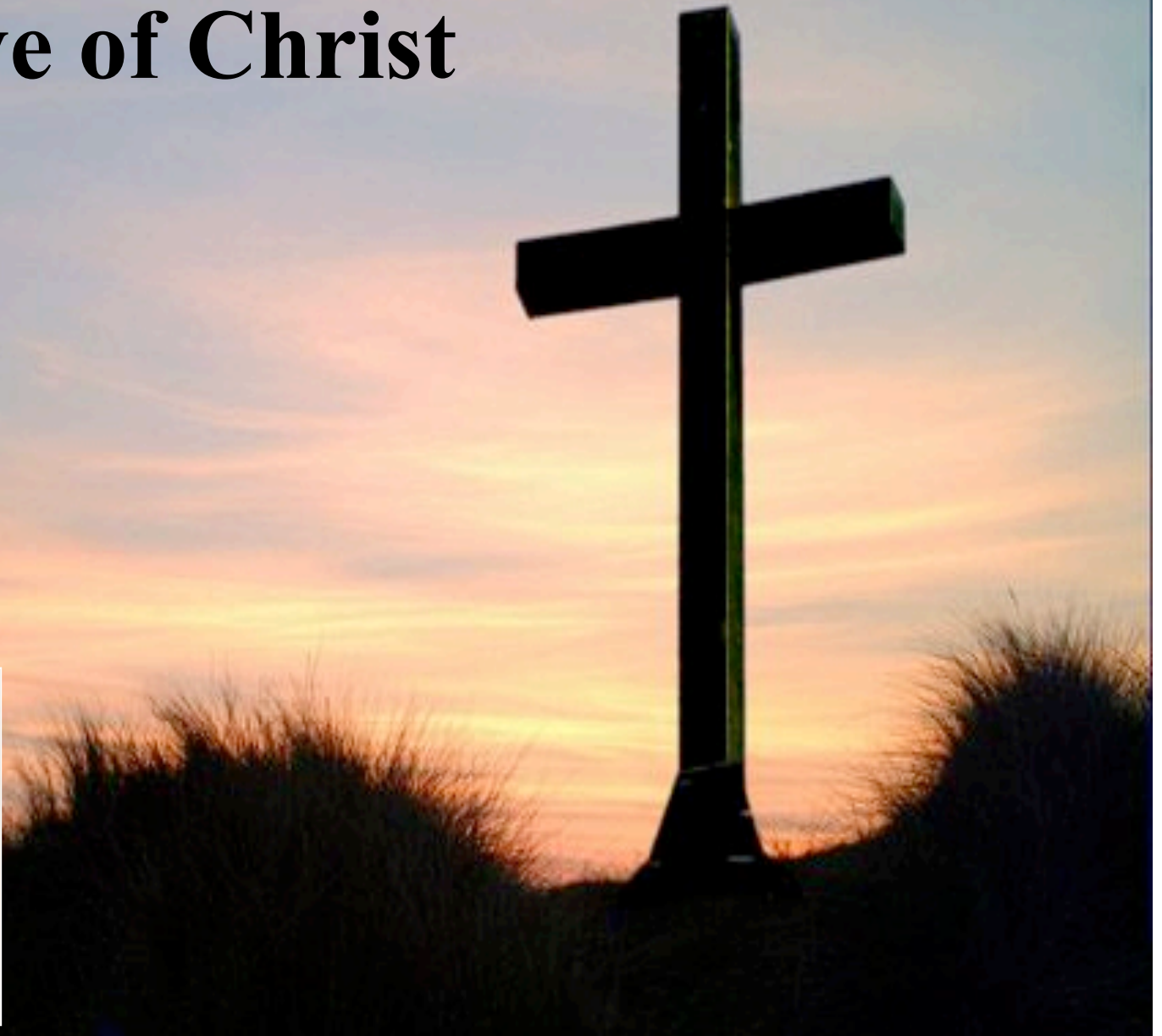
It first has a **receptive, registering, noticing** function.

Your mind is first your **inner eye** (Eph. 1:18).

Your mind as your inner eye



**The mind of Christ first = the
inner eye of Christ**



**Transformed by the renewal of your
mind first = the renewal of your
inner eye**



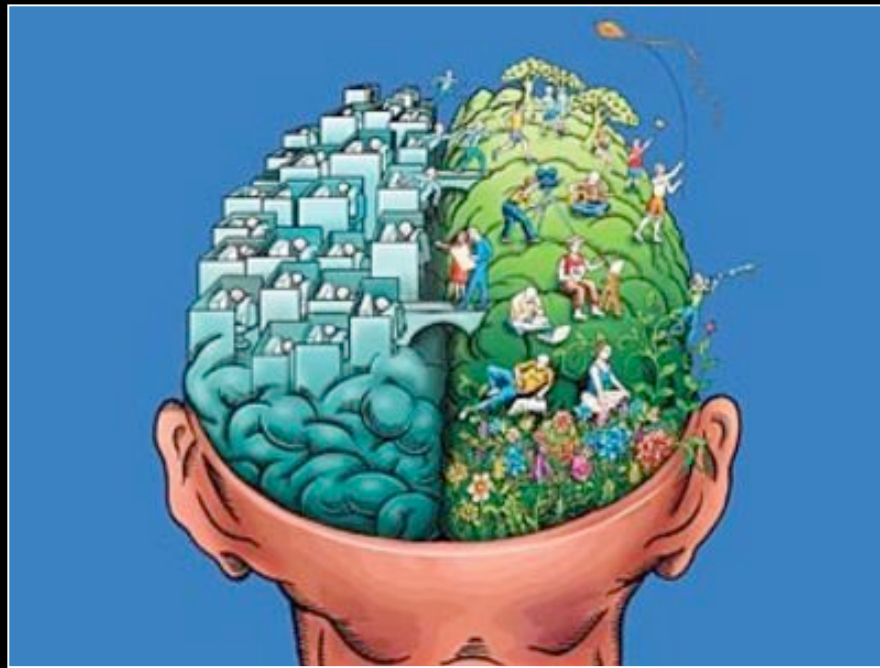
IV. The Soul

D. Four functions of the soul

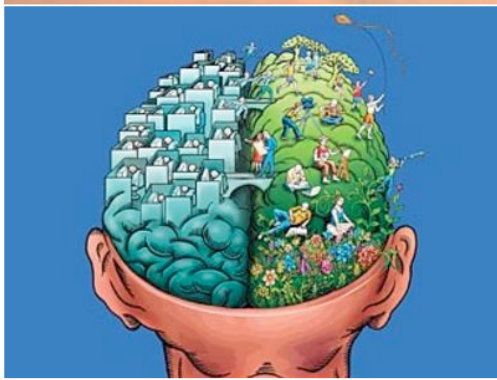
1. The soul functioning as mind (2)

Once your mind or inner eye has received, registered and noticed someone or something, it begins **to think** about what it has received, registered and noticed.

**Your mind thinking about
what it has received, registered
and noticed**



The mind of Christ also = thinking like Christ



**Be transformed by the renewal of
your mind also = be transformed by
the renewal of your thinking**



IV. The Soul

D. Four functions of the soul

2. The soul functioning as the heart

Once your mind or inner eye has received, registered, noticed and thought about something, it also begins to have **feelings** and **desires** about what it has received, registered noticed and thought about.



**Having
feelings and
desires
about what
you noticed
and
thought
about =
your soul
functioning
as heart**

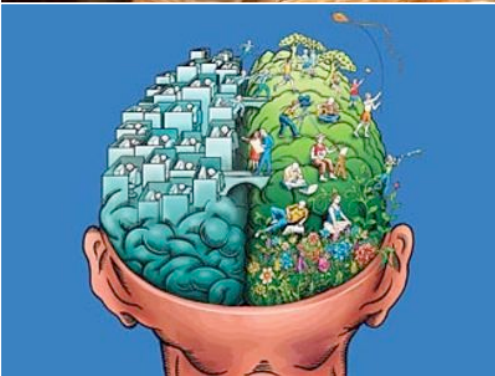
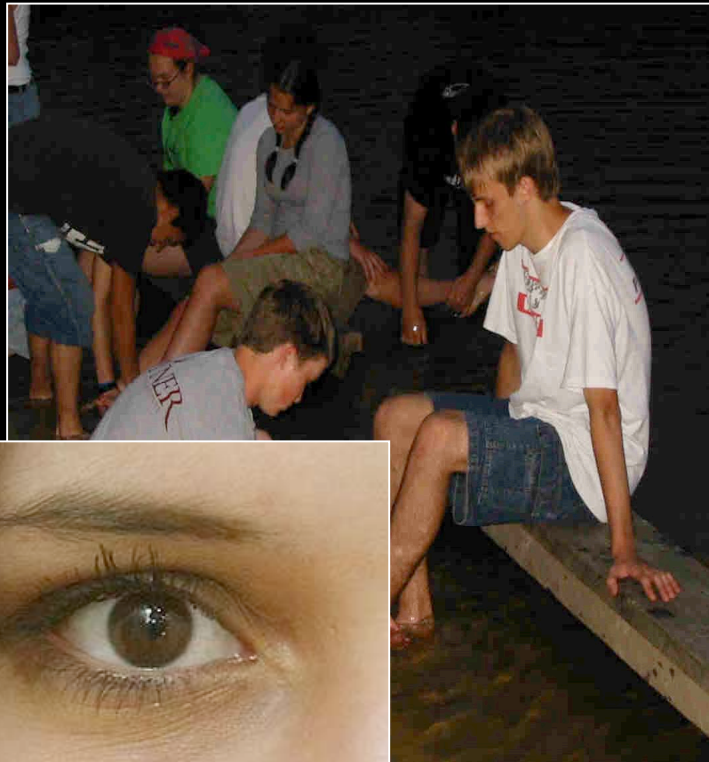
IV. The Soul

D. Four functions of the soul

3. The soul functioning as the will

Once your mind or inner eye has received, registered, noticed, thought about something and you begin to have feelings and desires about what you have received, registered, noticed and thought about, you make a **choice** according to your desires.

Your will is **your mind choosing** according to **your desires** and **feelings**.



**The mind
choosing
according
to its
desires and
feelings =
your soul
functioning
as your
will**

IV. The Soul

D. Four functions of the soul

4. The soul functioning as the spirit

Often refers to **bringing** what you notice with your inner eye, think about, desire and will to **God** and being **nourished** by God in your noticing, thinking, desiring and willing.

Bringing what you notice, think about, desire and will to God and being nourished by God = your soul functioning as spirit



IV. The Soul

E. Faith + the functions of the soul

1. Faith + soul functioning as mind

a. your inner eye

b. your cognitive reflection



Faith =
looking to
Jesus and
thinking about
Jesus

IV. The Soul

E. Faith + the functions of the soul

1. Faith + soul functioning as heart

a. desiring Jesus

b. trusting Jesus

Faith = desiring Jesus and trusting Jesus

*Abba,
Father*



IV. The Soul

E. Faith + the functions of the soul

1. Faith + soul functioning as will

- a. surrendering to Jesus
- b. following Jesus

Faith = surrendering to Jesus and following Jesus



IV. The Soul

E. Faith + the functions of the soul

1. Faith + soul functioning as spirit

a. receiving Jesus

b. being nourished by Jesus

**Faith = receiving Jesus and being
nourished by Jesus**



V. Spiritual Disciplines

A. Introduction



The observing mind or inner eye = crucial



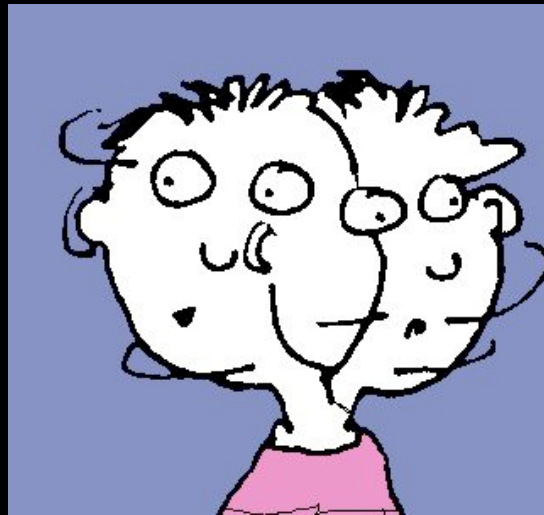
V. Spiritual Disciplines

A. Introduction

**The observing
mind or inner eye
= highly mobile**

V. Spiritual Disciplines

A. Introduction



**The observing mind or inner eye = easily
distracted**



V. Spiritual Disciplines

A. Introduction

The goal of disciplining the inner eye = to strengthen and direct its focus or attention

V. Spiritual Disciplines

A. Introduction



**What you pay attention to strengthens, energizes
and directs your focus**

Attention = your spiritual muscle

B. Disciplines that strengthen our focus or attention

1. The Discipline of Contemplation

Contemplation =

- **waking up** the presence of God in us and around us
- moving from doing to just **being present** with God
- **gazing** with your inner eye at the presence of God
- simply **enjoying** the presence of God.

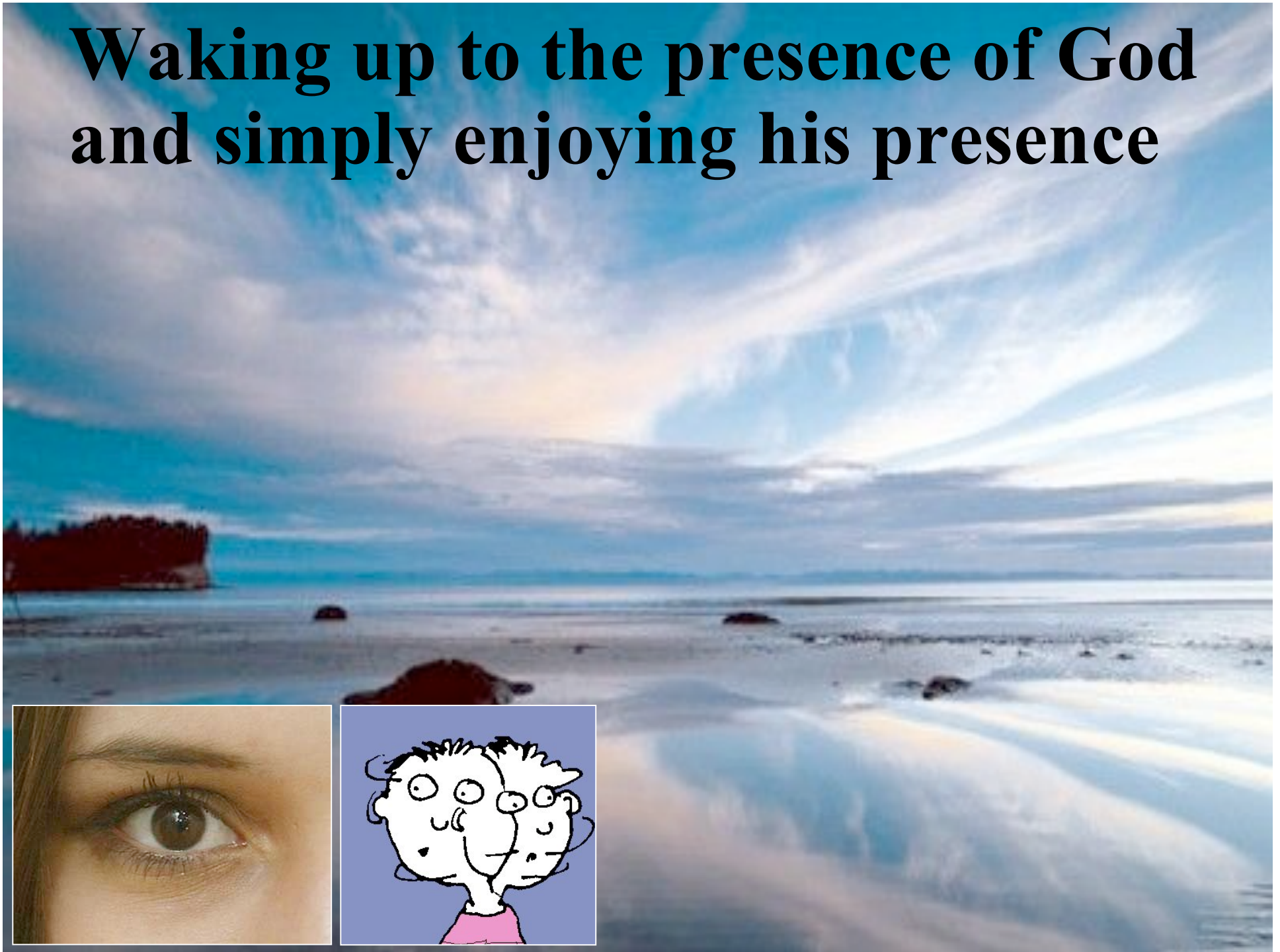
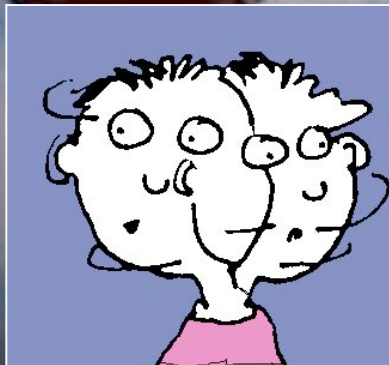
B. Disciplines that strengthen our focus or attention

1. The Discipline of Contemplation

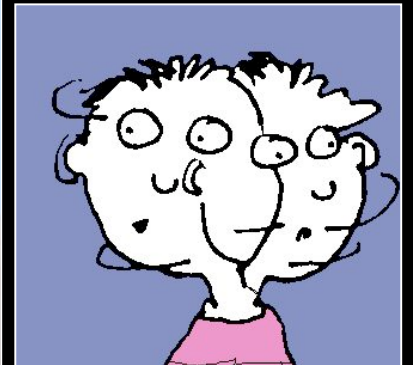
Scripture:

“We **fix our eyes** not on what is seen, but on what is **unseen**. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18; cf. Acts 17:27-28)

**Waking up to the presence of God
and simply enjoying his presence**



Waking up to the presence of God and simply enjoying his presence



B. Disciplines that strengthen our focus or attention

2. The Discipline of meditation

Meditation =

- to mull over
- to chew on
- to ruminate over

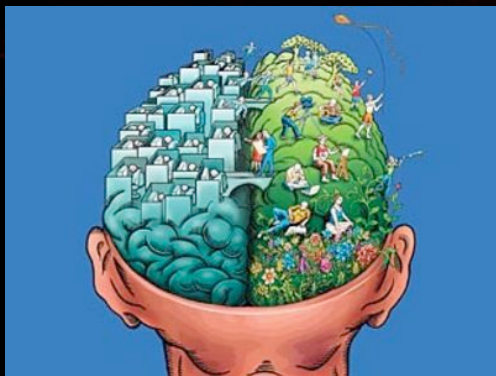
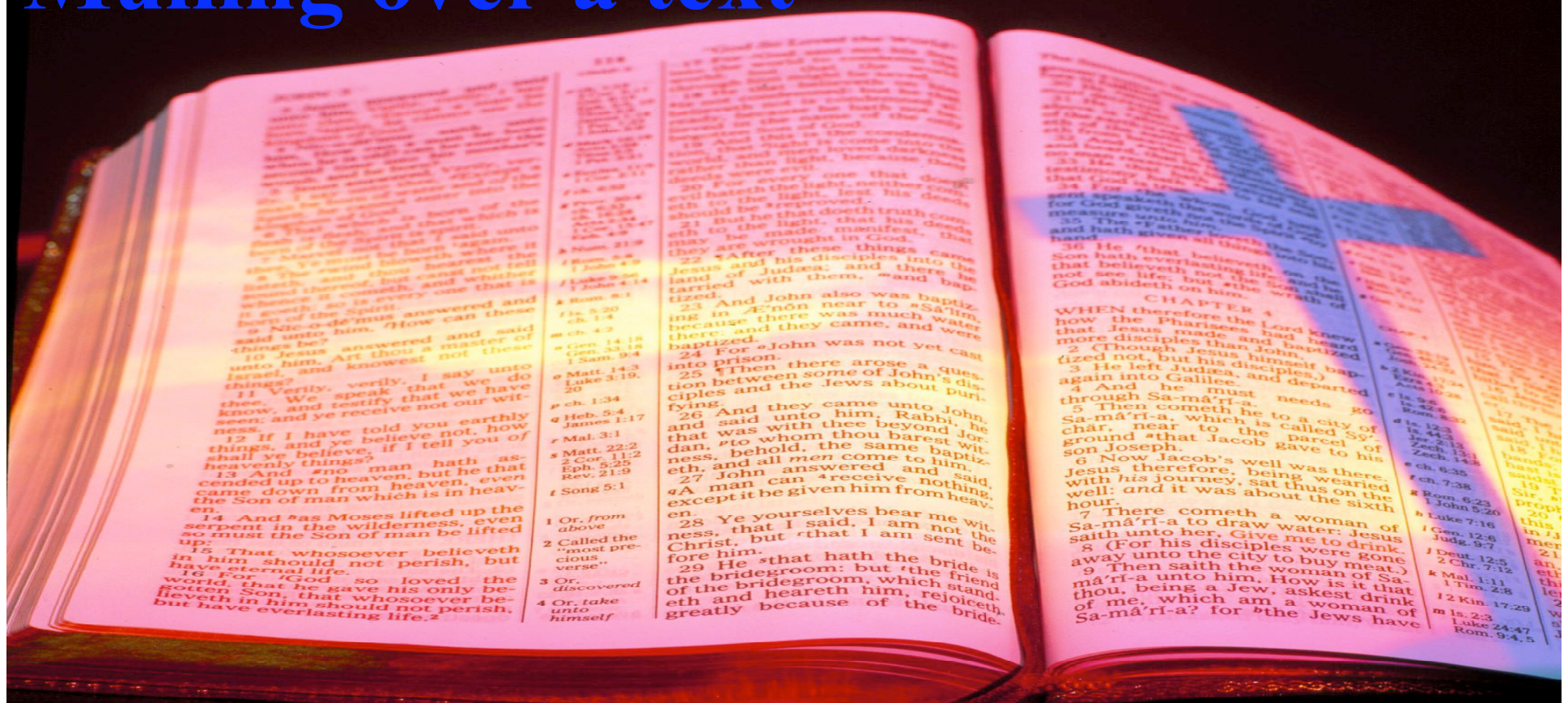
B. Disciplines that strengthen our focus or attention

2. The Discipline of meditation

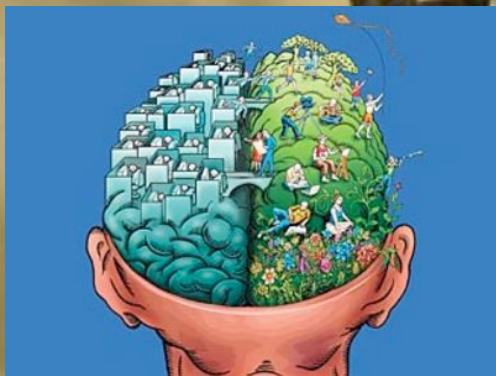
Scripture:

“Do not let this Book of the Law depart from our mouth; **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful”
(Joshua 1:8).

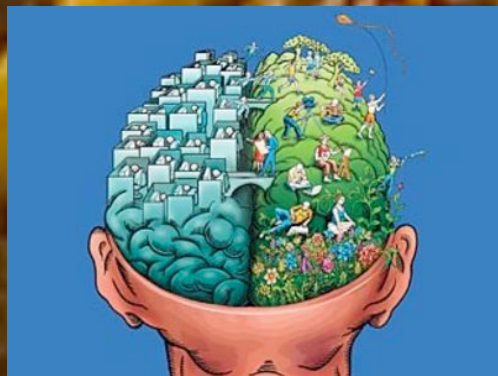
Mulling over a text



Chewing on a sermon



Ruminating over God's hand in history



B. Disciplines that strengthen our focus or attention

3. The Discipline of continual relational prayer

Continual relational prayer =

- being **online** with God 24-7
- having an **ongoing relational** conversation with God

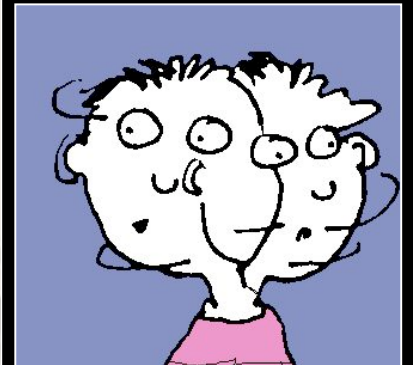
B. Disciplines that strengthen our focus or attention

3. The Discipline of continual relational prayer

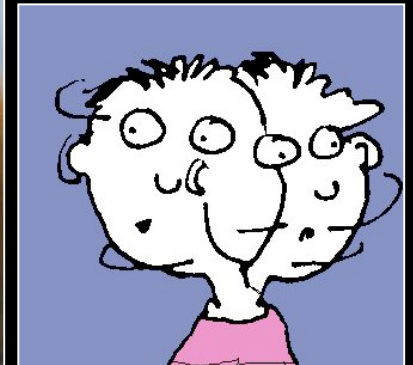
Scripture:

“Pray **continually**” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Being online with God



A continual relational conversation with God



B. Disciplines that strengthen our focus or attention

4. The Discipline of remembering

Remembering =

- **recalling** the the truth of God so that it **informs** and **animates** the present and **sustains** you for the future
- recalling the truth of God so that it **interpenetrates** and **co-inhabits** the present

B. Disciplines that strengthen our focus or attention

3. The Discipline of remembering

Scripture:

“And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in **remembrance** of me.’”

In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in **remembrance** of me.’”

The Truth of God interpenetrating and co-inhabiting the present



VI. Summary



Your soul needs to be disciplined

Your soul tends to build fences



The soul desires to live



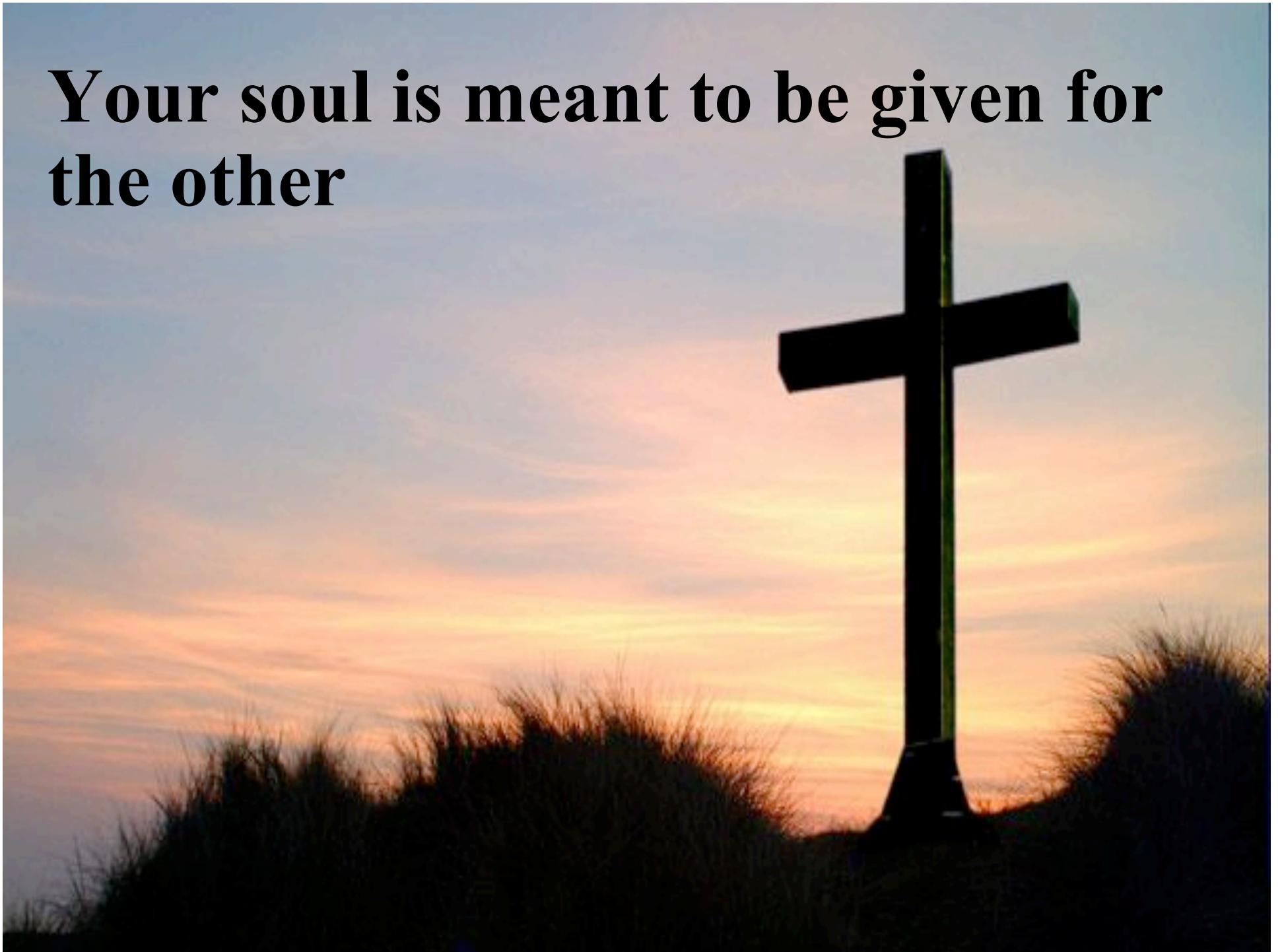


**Your soul is
the core of
who you
are**

**Your soul is meant to rest in the
Other**



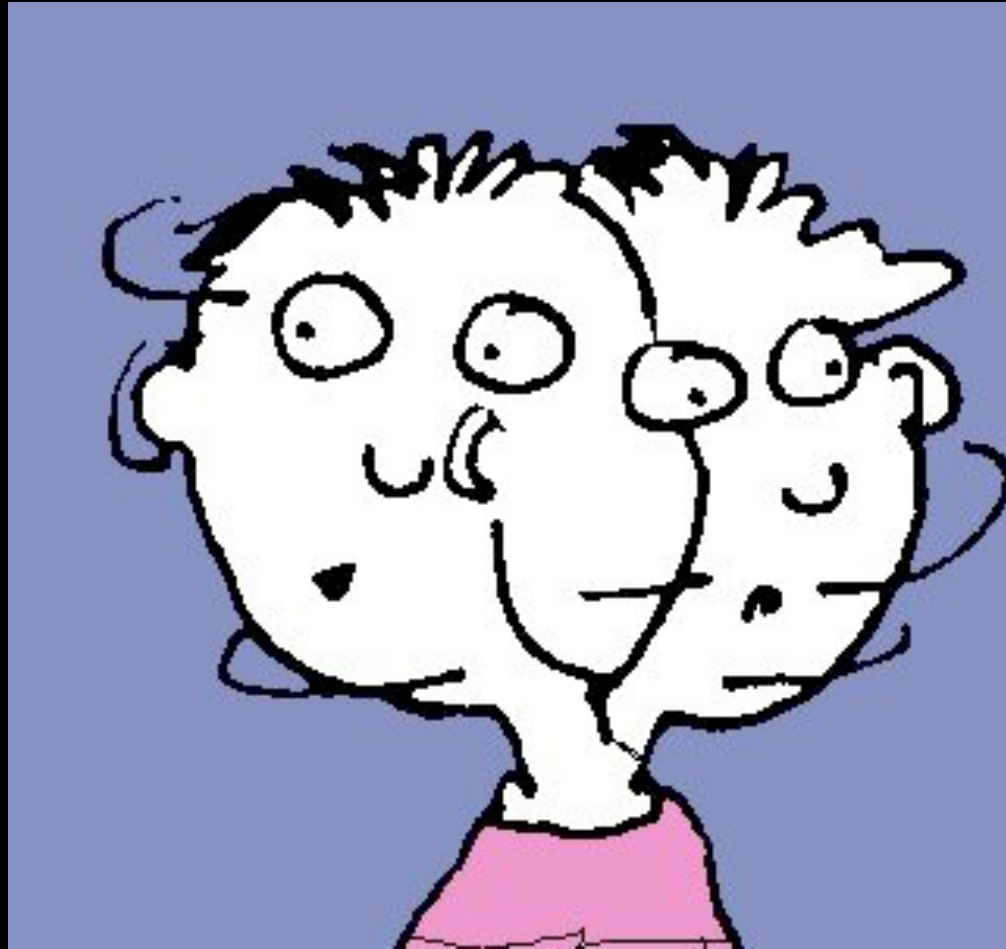
**Your soul is meant to be given for
the other**





**Your soul is highly
mobile**

Your soul is easily distracted



Your soul needs to be disciplined



Spiritual disciplines make you
response-able



**Spiritual disciplines are permeated with
grace**



**Spiritual disciplines are ultimately
directed at the functioning of your
inner eye**



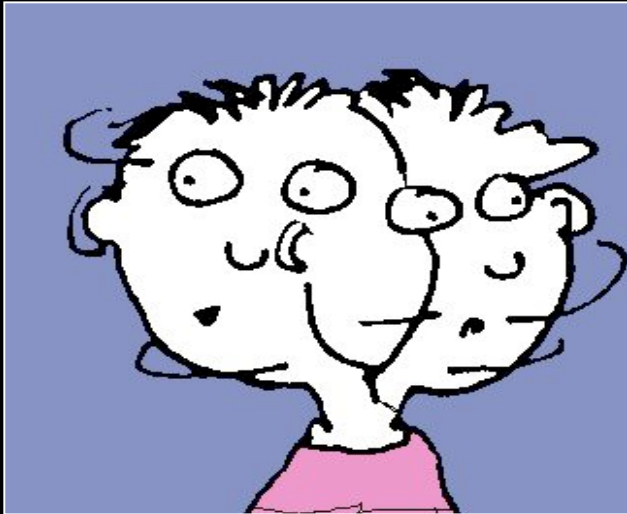


**The GOAL of
disciplining the
inner eye = to
strengthen,
energize and direct
its FOCUS or
ATTENTION**

**WHAT you pay
attention to
strengthens,
energizes and
directs your
attention**

**ATTENTION = your
spiritual muscle.**

Discussion



ATTENTION = your spiritual muscle.

My Faith looks up to Thee

My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine!
Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away,
O let me from this day be wholly Thine!

May Thy rich grace impart
Strength to my fainting heart, my zeal inspire!
As Thou hast died for me, O may my love to Thee,
Pure warm, and changeless be, a living fire!

My Faith looks up to Thee

While life's dark maze I tread,
And griefs around me spread, be Thou my Guide;
Bid darkness turn to day, wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray from Thee aside.

When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold sullen stream over me roll;
Blest Savior, then in love, fear and distrust remove;
O bear me safe above, a ransomed soul!